

Arizona—innocent—who was exposed to the measles.

I ask that we take this seriously, as a member of the Homeland Security Committee, and find a way to alert parents to make the right decision for their children. I will be continuing to work on this and have asked my own community to send out an alert to help save those children and the others who are vulnerable to the measles outbreak.

SITES RESERVOIR PROJECT

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, as California enters what looks like its fourth year of a severe drought, we need to take action so that when we do finally get rain once again, we will be able to store it.

Sites Reservoir is a project that has been talked about for many, many years in northern California that would store nearly 2 million acre-feet of water in its best possible configuration. So we need to take that action. A little bit later on in this session, we will be introducing legislation to authorize that.

We also need help from the Bureau of Reclamation in putting the funding forward to finish the feasibility studies that are necessary to go from talk, from dream, to getting construction going and having the water reservoirs that we need for California to stave off drought in the future years.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by welcoming our new members and by thanking the gentlewoman from Ohio, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, for her leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus during the 113th Congress. Thanks to her dedication and tireless work, this caucus is better positioned to address the diverse challenges of the African American community.

I also want to thank the new CBC chair, the Honorable Congressman G.K. BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina. I am confident that he will do a great job leading this caucus with steadfast commitment to justice and to building an America that works for everyone.

Let me also thank my counterpart, the Honorable Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, for joining me in leading the CBC Special Orders this year. I am truly honored to take on this new role, and I look forward to working with her as we help carry out the critical mission of this caucus.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, in the midst of the civil rights movement, hundreds of brave men and women gathered in Selma, Alabama, to begin a long, arduous march to Montgomery in support of the fundamental truth: that every American, regardless of what they look like, has the right to vote.

□ 1930

On March 7, 1965, 600 men and women set out from Selma following the death of 26-year-old Jimmie Lee Jackson, a deacon from Marion, Alabama, who died from gunshot wounds inflicted by a State trooper at a nonviolent demonstration.

Theirs was a peaceful, nonviolent march, but it was met with fierce brutality. It would take the marchers two more attempts to arrive at Montgomery; but on March 25, after a 12-day journey, they did arrive.

Since that day, our country has made significant strides in achieving equality and justice for all, but significant challenges remain unmet. Tonight, we will examine where we have come from, where we are, and where we would like to go as a society. We must be ready to go.

In 1965, Selma became the focal point of voter registration efforts in the South. At the time, only 2 percent of the city's eligible African American voters had been able to register. The impact of Selma to the Montgomery march was profound.

As Dr. King said, "Selma produced the voting rights legislation of 1965." The Voting Rights Act of 1965 banned discriminatory voting requirements that disenfranchised African American voters throughout this country; yet, today, the dream of full equality is still something many African Americans can only dream of.

Where we are, nearly 6 years after the end of the recession, people still struggle to find work, and the gap between the rich and poor continues to grow. For African Americans, this situation is severe, given the disproportionate effect of unemployment on our communities.

At the same time, there remains widespread poverty, a defining challenge of our time. This persistent economic inequality threatens to undercut the gains that African American communities have made, and it undermines the idea of economic mobility, the idea that if you work hard in this country and have ambition, you can get ahead. The economic crisis is not only facing African American communities.

Where we are in education, education is the most important economic investment we can make now and for future generations; yet, across the country,

we still have seen cuts to education at all levels and attacks on critical programs like Head Start and Pell grants.

These attacks undermine the ability of African Americans to get ahead—that is why I strongly support President Obama's new, bold initiative for free access to community colleges—so, too, do efforts to dismantle social safety net programs which our communities depend on. Those efforts are irresponsible, unjust, and contrary to who we are as Americans.

The Congressional Black Caucus will make criminal justice reform a centerpiece of our agenda. We will work to reduce the epidemic of poverty in this country. We will work to create educational opportunities for African American children, and we will support efforts to strengthen our 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The CBC also remains committed to fighting against efforts to dismantle the social safety net. We are determined to restore section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and to make sure everyone, regardless of what they look like or where they come from, has equal access to the polls, and we resolve to ensure that increasing diversity in this Nation is reflected in American corporations.

Together, these policies will bring us closer as a nation where we are empowering the communities of African Americans, and they will benefit from the full equality and live the American Dream. There is no doubt that we are in difficult times in this Nation.

Injustices are widespread and threaten some of our most fundamental rights, but we will find no answers in apathy, no comfort in complacency. As we always have, we will continue the march for progress, for freedom, for justice, and for equality for all.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege now that I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois, Ms. ROBIN KELLY.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, my friend from New Jersey. It is an honor to host with you this year. I am excited about the work ahead for the CBC in the 114th Congress. I also want to acknowledge the great job that Congressman Horsford and Congressman JEFFRIES did in hosting the Special Order hour in the 113th Congress. I also want to honor our past chair, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, for all of her great work.

Discussing 50 years from Selma, where we were, where we are, and where we are headed, I expect this to be very stimulating, frustrating, and rewarding all at the same time. It remains that we have a lot of work to do.

Mr. PAYNE. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, it is my honor and privilege for the first time in the 114th Congress to have the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, G.K. BUTTERFIELD, address us, and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I thank the gentleman for yielding.